

Goals of the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS)

According to numerous studies, onset of a smoking habit and attitudes towards tobacco have roots in early childhood and preventive action should be implemented as soon as possible. To develop an effective strategy, epidemiological data on smoking habit and smoking-related factors among school children are essential. Keeping this in mind, the Tobacco Free Initiative (TFI), World Health Organization (WHO) and the Office on Smoking and Health (OSH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have developed the Global Youth Tobacco Survey. The GYTS project was launched in 1999 and until now has been completed in 97 countries, 16 of them in Europe. Via self-administered questionnaire GYTS monitors information on prevalence of tobacco use and its initiation, attitudes, knowledge and behaviours related to tobacco use, environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) exposure, minors' access to tobacco products, role of advertisement and mass media campaigns as well as prevention curricula in schools. Target group of the survey is adolescents aged 13-15 years. The information obtained from the survey is of a great importance in planning of effective measures in tobacco control among young people.

In Slovakia, GYTS was carried out on the turn of 2002 and 2003 and was administrated by the Jessenius Faculty of Medicine, Comenius University in Martin in co-operation with Faculty of Social Work and Health, Trnava University, Medical Faculty of the P.J. Safarik University in Kosice, State Health Institute in Banska Bystrica, Faculty of Humanities and Natural Sciences, University of Presov, State Faculty Health Institute in Bratislava and WHO Liaison Office in Slovakia, Bratislava.

Material and methods

The GYTS Slovakia is a school-based survey, which employed a two-stage cluster sample design to produce a nationally representative sample of elementary school pupils in grades 7, 8 and 9. As a first stage, 60 elementary schools have been selected proportionally to size (larger schools had the larger probability to be selected) including sub-samples representing eight regions of Slovakia: Bratislava (including the Capitol), Trnava, Trencin, Nitra, Zilina, Banska Bystrica, Presov and Kosice. List of elementary schools and enrollement data were obtained from the Office of School Information and Prognosis, Ministry of Education.

The second sampling stage consisted of systematic equal probability sampling (with a random start) of classes from each school that participated in the survey. All classes in the selected school were included in the sampling frame. All pupils in the selected classes were eligible to participate in the survey.

A weighting factor was applied to each student record to adjust for non-response and for the varying probabilities of selection. For the GYTS Slovakia 4,594 sampled students completed usable questionnaires. The school response rate was 98.3%, and the pupil response rate was 87.4%. The overall response rate was 85.9%. SUDAAN and Epi Info were used to compute 95% confidence intervals for the estimates. The sampling and descriptive summarising of data were done in CDC, Atlanta.

Survey procedures were designed to protect the students' privacy by allowing for anonymous and voluntary participation. For each region a field administrator has been designated. Standard GYTS questionnaire adopted for Slovakia and containing 89 questions has been used. The survey was administered in the classrooms. Pupils were informed by field administrators about the purpose of the survey and about an appropriate way how to administrate the survey. Filled answer sheets were scanned by computer and analysed. The fieldwork was done from December 2002 to January 2003. Statistical tests for difference were determined by comparing the range of 95% confidence intervals for each estimate, at the $p=0.05$ level.